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UNCLAS HARARE 001994

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NAIROBI FOR PFLAUMER

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: EDITORIAL ON WSSD

11. Under headline "Too many words, too little action," the independent weekly "The Financial Gazette" dedicated its August 29, 2002 editorial to the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Excerpts:

12. "Zimbabweans, as indeed many other Africans, will be forgiven if they dismiss as a circus the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) now under way in South Africa. . . They and millions of others in the developing world are only acutely aware that too many similar talk shops have been staged before and the result has almost always been the same: no tangible improvement in the basic quality of their wretched lives. . . The world's poor have now become used to helplessly watching their leaders gather for such lofty meetings at a great cost to formulate right-sounding policies and pledges which are quickly forgotten.

"The timing of the staging of the WSSD could not have been more ironic, or perhaps an eye-opener, for Zimbabwe. . . Dubbed the Third Revolution, President Robert Mugabe's ruthless campaign to stay in power at whatever cost has been truly sobering to the nation. A wasteland is all that remains of a country that was only rivaled in Africa at independence by economic powerhouses South Africa and Nigeria. But Zimbabweans can be certain that Mugabe, when he joins other leaders at the WSSD, will make the usual positive declarations of eradicating poverty and disease and of empowering his nation and protecting its natural resources - the key goals of the summit. And yet back home, the actions of his government will indeed highlight why such summits, at least for Africa, are useless talk shops that are better forgotten.

"Indeed Mugabe's weekend appointment of the so-called war Cabinet - a Cabinet whose mandate is to crush opponents and all voices of democracy - once again makes the point that he is determined to take Zimbabwe down with him at his suicidal path. . ."

SULLIVAN